



SUBMITTED PHOTO

MILITARY COUPLE

Staff Sgt. Samuel McKee is a member of the Mississippi Army National Guard's 185th Aviation Group, Company G. His wife, Theresa, sends this message to him as he serves in Iraq: "Hope you are doing fine. Everyone at home says hello and take care of yourself. The kids are growing up fast. They had a good Christmas and got lots of stuff. We had a houseful on Christmas Eve at your Mom and Daddy's. Logan still wants to come see you in Iraq. He's got a birthday coming up. He wanted to know if you would be home for his birthday. We miss you and hope to see you soon."

Business profile ...

Twinkles

We asked Meridian business owners to fill out questionnaires about themselves and their work. Some questions were serious, some were just for fun.

Shirley Sollie and her daughters, Dana Sollie Casey and Stephanie Null, own Twinkles at 3601 Poplar Springs Drive.

Dana and her husband, Chad, attend Highland Baptist Church. She is a board member of the Meridian Museum of Art. Shirley and her husband, Dennis, have three children. They also attend Highland Baptist Church and participate in the choir. Shirley is also a registered nurse at Rush Foundation Hospital.

By Dana Sollie Casey
special to The Star

My business

- We specialize in hand-painted canvas artwork, furniture decor, fine infants' and children's clothing, heirlooms and unique specialty gifts for children.

- How it started? We started displaying our items at art festivals and markets and we had a small workshop on the side. Later, with experience, it grew into a business.

- No. of employees: Four

What I think

- The best piece of professional advice I ever received was from Doc Braswell at Meridian Community College's Webb Center, who made me answer the question, "How is your business going to be different from all the rest?"

- What I look for in employees is excitement about what they are doing and respect for our business, espe-



PHOTO BY PENNY RANDALL / THE MERIDIAN STAR

SPECIALTY STORE

Stephanie Null, left, Dana Sollie Casey and Shirley Sollie are the women of Twinkles — a store that sells specialty items for children.

WE CAN'T IMAGINE

- ▶ A day without enjoying our jobs.
- ▶ A week without thanking God for all that he has done for us.
- ▶ A year without a vacation.

country? Yes, people were a little unsure about what was going to happen to our nation and they worry about future attacks. It really brought people closer and religion became more appealing to many.

- Has it touched my family's life? Yes, we are blessed and very fortunate to be together

and safe thanks to the courage of our troops.

- Has it affected my business? It slowed during that time, but has begun to get better.

- My message for the troops: We support you and keep you and your families in our prayers.

A letter from home

- Has Sept. 11 and the U.S. War on Terror changed this

Why does Perrin Burchfield wear

Patriotic scrubs?

Find out in the Health and Medical section.

Bragging on Sgt. Jackie Abercrombie

Daniel Robinson is a sophomore at West Lauderdale High School. He submitted this "Bragging Rights" story about Jackie Abercrombie — a corporal with the Meridian Police Department and a sergeant with the Mississippi Army National Guard's 185th Aviation Group, Company G.

By Daniel Robinson
special to The Star

If I had to choose a mentor in the military, I would choose Jackie Abercrombie. Jackie is an all-American hero.

He is my mentor because he is a member of the Meridian SWAT team. He is a soldier, fighting in Iraq for our country, and he is a faithful Christian man.

On the SWAT team, he gets all the respect he deserves and he always stays calm during high-stress procedures. Throughout his military and law enforcement career, he is dedicated to helping his fellow Americans. He is an outstanding gentleman.

Jackie is fighting for our country in Iraq. He is all that he can be at what he does. He risks his life to help others every day for our country. Jackie is the best man for the job that he has. Due to his law enforcement career, he knows everything about guns; in Iraq, he builds and repairs guns for his fellow American soldiers.

Jackie is a faithful Christian man. When he is not on duty, he attends Sunday school and worship services with his family and friends. He is a leader and participates in youth activities.

Due to his military career, he is not able to attend church regularly, but he stays faithful. The best Christian man I know, in the military, is Jackie.

He is a true-life Christian soldier and an officer of the law. Jackie stands firm in what he does. He is my mentor because he is on the Meridian SWAT team, a soldier fighting in Iraq and a faithful Christian man. Jackie Abercrombie is my mentor.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

TWO JOBS, ONE GOAL

Daniel Robinson says there's a point of similarity between Sgt. Jackie Abercrombie's jobs as a police officer and a Guardsman — his dedication to helping fellow citizens.